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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02941 042052Z

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ACTION NODS-00

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O 041941Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9374

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2941

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LE
SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL ELIAS SARKIS

1. MET WITH CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR ELIAS SARKIS APRIL 3. SARKIS AND RAYMOND EDDE ARE THE TWO LEADERS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL SWEEPSTAKES. SARKIS LOST TO FRANGIE BY ONE VOTE IN 1970.

2. SARKIS RECALLED THAT HE HAD WORKED MANY YEARS FOR FORMER PRESIDENT CHEHUB AND THAT HE FULLY BACKED CHEHAB'S BASIC IDEAS OF CLOSER AND MORE EQUITABLE COOPERATION WITH THE MOSLEMS AND THE NEED FOR SOCIAL REFORM. HOWEVER, HE CONCENTRATED ON THE QUESTION OF SECURITY. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY CABINET OR ANY NEW PRESIDENT TO CARRY ON IF THERE DID NOT EXIST A SECURITY FORCE. FOR THIS REASON, HE THOUGHT IT WAS ADVISABLE FOR SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION TO TAKE PLACE.

3. I POINTED OUT TO SARKIS THAT SYRIAN MILITARY INTER-VENTION WAS A VERY DANGEROUS MEASURE AND COULD TRIGGER A REACTION FROM ISRAEL. I ASKED HIM THEREFORE IF THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO MAINTAINING SECURITY. IN REPLY SARKIS STATED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO PUT TOGETHER SOME SORT OF UNIFIED SECURITY FORCE BY DRAWING ON THE ARMED FORCES OF THE RIGHT, THE LEFT AND THE PALESTINIANS. HE WAS NOT COMPLETELY SURE THAT THIS COULD WORK,BUT,
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GIVEN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT A

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LOT WOULD DEPEND ON PALESTINIAN COOPERATION.

4. ALTHOUGH HE LACKS CHARISMA, SARKIS MAKES A VERY GOOD IMPRESSION. HE OBVIOUSLY HAS A VERY GOOD GRASP OF THE EXISTING POLITICAL REALITIES AND HE HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING AN EXPERIENCED, FIRST RATE MANAGER.
BROWN

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